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## McFARLAND, USA



*McFarland, USA* is a feel good movie that has a lot to say about cultural sensitivity and how people learn to live together out of respect and mutual understanding of each other's personal struggles. Kevin Costner once again shows his talent for sports-related movies as a coach who is forced to relocate to a town where he learns by example of what it means to be part of an extended family. What he learns is that family can be created in the context of sharing good times and bad and building character. A coach in need of a team and some kids, who run out of necessity, come together with the goal of becoming fast enough to compete with more "privileged" teams. Of course you know what's going to happen, but with Costner at the head of the program, you can't help but smile at every step along the way.

*McFarland, USA* is also about finding where you belong in the world, discovering what is really important and striving to win not just a cross country race, but in life. Parents who want the best for their children make tremendous sacrifices for their well-being.

When day-to-day existence is determined by everyone's ability to work regardless of age, and sharing and community are the foundation of a town, there are lessons to be learned by everyone. I liked the message inherent in this movie. It addresses pre-conceived notions about language, culture, family and friendship. We all have our prejudices, and this movie explores them in a nonthreatening and effective way that Disney films are known for.

*McFarland, USA* is definitely a family movie. The themes of acceptance, teamwork, goal-setting, accomplishment and winning, along with what it really means to become "acculturated", are given a little twist that help make it special. The casting is good as we see a Latino family honoring their elders, gathering together to cook and celebrate milestones. Old beliefs are challenged and the possibilities of using your gifts to obtain a better future are at the heart of *McFarland*. Being based on a true story only makes it better, so be sure to stay through the credits to find out what happened to the real subject of the movie.

Going to a movie that makes you laugh and cry, and doesn't exploit, insult or bombard you with special effects, is such a refreshing way to spend a few hours. I recommend you take a trip to *McFarland, USA*.

I give it four Golden Tickets.

